



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWS



JANUARY 2009

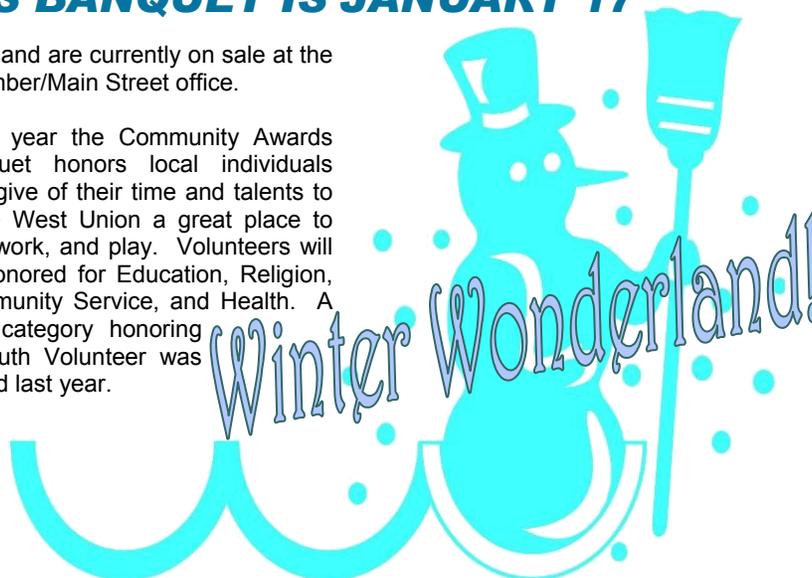
COMMUNITY AWARDS BANQUET IS JANUARY 17

The 2009 Community Awards Banquet is scheduled for January 17, 2009 at Echo Valley Banquet Center and will honor local community volunteers, Main Street Award winners, and the West Union Citizen of the Year. The event is sponsored by the West Union Chamber of Commerce and Main Street West Union featuring a "Winter Wonderland" theme.

Requests for proposals to cater the meal were sent to all local restaurants and catering firms and will be offered to the best bidder, with special consideration given to Chamber members. Local civic organizations and clubs have been invited to sponsor an hors d'oeuvre or dessert. Tickets for the annual event are \$15

each and are currently on sale at the Chamber/Main Street office.

Each year the Community Awards Banquet honors local individuals who give of their time and talents to make West Union a great place to live, work, and play. Volunteers will be honored for Education, Religion, Community Service, and Health. A new category honoring a Youth Volunteer was added last year.



PUNCH CARDS A GREAT SUCCESS!

The 3rd annual Holiday Punch Card Promotion, "Evergreen Christmas" was a great success. This year 32 businesses participated in the 7-week event which encouraged customers to shop locally and rewarded them with weekly prize drawings. This year 3,517 completed punch cards were turned in with a value of \$527,550.00 spent locally. A major goal of the program is to thank customers for choosing to support West Union merchants and to create an awareness of local dollars spent

throughout the holiday season, which also contributes to the tax base of the community. During these tough economic times, it is increasingly important to maintain our current customer base and encourage their repeat business on a regular basis.

Thank you to all the businesses that participated and to their staff for taking the extra time to punch customers cards during the busy holiday season.

Congratulations to the following prize winners drawn on December 24th:

Wii Gaming System: Barb Spies

Fountain: Jennifer Mackey

Tom-Tom Navigation System:
Jennifer Bunn

Winter Decoration: Marie Schneider

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NEW VISTA VOLUNTEER IN WEST UNION

Another benefit of the Green Pilot project for the community of West Union is the addition of a new staff person in the Chamber/Main Street office. Michelle Zander started her year of service through the AmeriCorps VISTA program on November 23rd and will be working in the community for the next year. VISTA stands for Volunteers in Service to America and was founded in 1965. Among other activities, AmeriCorps VISTA members, who serve full time for a year, recruit community volunteers, raise funds, help manage projects, and build the capacity of non-profit organizations to become more sustainable.

Michelle will be assisting with the Green Pilot project, the Fayette County Local Housing Trust fund, and the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative.

Michelle and her husband Jason moved to West Union in September. If you have not met Michelle yet, please stop in the office and say hello. Michelle has put together a great power point presentation about the VISTA program and what she will be working on here in West Union. If you are in need of a program for a local group or organization, please consider having Michelle present to your group.



Why Shop Locally?

Ten good reasons to encourage your customers to choose your store over the internet, a mail-order catalog, or the national chain stores.

1. *Protect Local Character and Prosperity*

By choosing to support locally-owned businesses, you help maintain your community's diversity, character, and distinctive flavor.

2. *Community Well-Being*

Locally-owned businesses build strong neighborhoods by sustaining communities, linking neighbors, and by contributing to local causes, organizations, and schools.

3. *Local Decision Making*

Local ownership means that important decisions are made locally by people who live in the community and who will feel the impact of those decisions.

4. *Keeping Dollars in the Local Economy*

Dollars spent in locally-owned businesses have much more impact on your community than dollars spent at national chains, and 100% more impact than shopping online. When shopping locally, you simultaneously create jobs, fund City services through sales tax, invest in neighborhood improvement, and promote community development.

5. *Job and Wages*

Locally-owned businesses create more jobs locally and, in some cases, provide better wages and benefits than chain stores do.

6. *Entrepreneurship*

Entrepreneurship fuels America's economic innovation and prosperity, and serves as a key means for families to move out of low-wage jobs and into a better quality of life.

7. *Public Benefits and Costs*

Local stores in town centers require comparatively little infrastructure and make more efficient use of public service relative to big chain stores.

8. *Environmental Sustainability*

Local stores help to sustain vibrant, compact, walkable town centers—which in turn are essential to reducing sprawl, and therefore automobile use and water pollution.

9. *Competition*

A marketplace of tens of thousands of small businesses is the best way to ensure innovation.

10. *Product Diversity*

A multitude of small businesses, each selecting products based on their own interests and the needs of their local customers, guarantees a much broader range of product choices directed specifically at the local population, and their needs, wants, and lifestyles.

GREEN PILOT PROJECT UPDATE



WEBSITE: Make sure you visit www.westunion.com to see the NEW website for West Union. As a Chamber member your business is listed for FREE. The site also includes a Calendar of Events, minutes from City Council, newsletters from the Chamber, and Main Street West Union, and a wealth of local information. Check it out!

STREETSCAPE DESIGN: Design work continues on the proposed streetscape project. TeKippe Engineering and Conservation Design Forum are both working on schematic designs to include more of the green concepts. A more detailed design will allow the city to provide more detailed cost estimates and should be complete in 2009.

EARTH-FRIENDLY SHOPPING BAGS: The Chamber of Commerce has received another shipment of the new reusable West Union shopping bags which were first distributed as a part of the Holiday Punch Card promotion. We encourage everyone to use the bags when you shop locally and to watch for special deals if you are “caught” using your bag. Use of these bags will reduce the number of plastic shopping bags that end up in the landfill and do not ever break down. Two styles of shopping bags are available for purchase at the Chamber office and cost \$1.00 or \$2.50, depending on the style chosen.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT PROGRAM: Over 50 local businesses took advantage of the free energy audits last fall and very soon these folks will be able to take advantage of a new grant program to assist with the installation of several energy efficiency measures. Any local business that had an energy audit completed and has a signed consent form on file in the Main Street office will be able to apply for grant funds to assist with the cost of installing certain energy efficient products in their business. Complete details of the new program will be delivered later this month to each business who had an audit performed. If you did not have an audit, but would like to participate, you will need to schedule an audit with Black Hills Energy and sign the necessary consent and release forms. For more information please contact Robin Bostrom at 422-3070.

WEST UNION SCRIP MONEY

The holidays are over and now customers are shopping with their West Union Scrip Money! What's a retailer to do with that local money?? Don't despair—it is really very easy to redeem! Scrip money should be treated just like a cash transaction in your business and can be included in your deposit at either Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank or First National Bank. If you prefer, you may bring your redeemed scrip money to the Chamber office where we will issue you a check. You may give change back from a scrip money purchase but we recommend not more than \$5.00. West Union Scrip money is really just a gift certificate to shop anywhere in West Union! Scrip money is not redeemable for cash and should not be accepted after the expiration date, which is usually a year from the date of purchase, unless the purchaser requests a shorter time period. Scrip money is good for our local economy, as studies show that a dollar spent within a local community turns six times through other purchases, salaries, taxes, and local donations. THANK YOU for accepting West Union Scrip money in your business, and remember it's good all year long!

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We Want You Back!

«Business Name»
«Manager»
«Mailing Address»
«City State for Mailing»

AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Happy New Year!
Chamber Office Closed

Watch the Outback Bowl Game | 14 Smart Marketing Seminar—6:00 p.m. |
| 5 City Council Meeting—5:30 p.m. | 15 Barn Quilt Meeting—8:00 a.m.

Business Consultant in WU—
call for an appointment! |
| 6 Barn Quilt Meeting—8:30 a.m.

Fast Trac Class—6:30 p.m. | 17 Community Awards Banquet—
6:00 p.m. |
| 7 Fayette County Local Housing
Trust Fund—2:30 p.m. | 19 City Council Meeting—5:30 p.m. |
| 13 Chamber Board Meeting—8:00
a.m.

Main Street Board Meeting—
6:00 p.m. | 20 Main Street Design Committee
—6:00 p.m. |
| | 22 Regional Chamber Meeting in
West Union—10:00 a.m. |
| | 26 Fayette County Community
Foundation—12:00 p.m. |

